

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 11200 081614Z

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SUBJECT: VISIT TO USSR OF ARTIST JAMIE WYETH

STATE FOR CU/EE

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SUMMARY: THE VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION JULY 19-29 BY WELL KNOWN AMERICAN ARTIST JAMIE WYETH WAS QUALIFIED SUCCESS IN TERMS OF POST OBJECTIVES AND UN-QUALIFIED SUCCESS IN TERMS OF UNDENIABLY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION THE AFFEABLE AND INTELLIGENT WYETH MADE ON LIMITED NUMBER OF SOVIET ARTISTS THE UNION OF ARTISTS ARRANGED FOR HIM TO MEET. WYETH TRAVELED AS GUEST OF ARTISTS' UNION, THE FIRST AMERICAN ARTIST TO BE SO INVITED, AS PART OF A UNION-PROPOSED EXCHANGE PLANNED TO COINCIDE WITH APOLLO-SOYUZ JOINT FLIGHT AND WITH CONCURRENT US-USSR SPACE ART EXHIBIT IN WHICH THREE WYETH WATERCOLORS APPEAR. HIS PROGRAM, THEREFORE, WAS ARRANGED BY UNION AND INCLUDED HEAVY DOSE OF STANDARD SIGHTSEEING ACTIVITIES WITH VISITS TO STUDIOS OF ONLY TWO OFFICIAL, BUT LITTLE-KNOWN ARTISTS. VISIT CONCLUDED ON POSITIVE NOTE WITH INFORMAL UNION PROPOSAL FOR EXCHANGE SOMETIME IN 1976 OF WYETH FAMILY EXHIBIT IN USSR FOR ALL-SOVIET EXHIBIT IN US. WHILE

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 11200 081614Z

UNION HANDLING OF WYETH PROGRAM AT BEST WAS ADEQUATE,

POST OPINION IS THAT UNION ACTUALLY SURPRISED AT SUCCESS OF VISIT AND IS NOW BETTER PREPARED AND APPARENTLY MOST WILLING ARRANGE PROGRAM OF NEXT AMERICAN ARTIST, POSSIBLY ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING COURSE OF WYETH MOSCOW VISIT IT SOON BECAME CLEAR THAT DESPITE SEVERAL EARLIER PLANNING SESSIONS WITH EMBOFFS UNION OF ARTISTS WAS UNPREPARED ORGANIZE AND HANDLE WYETH LECTURE, ANTICIPATED KEYNOTE OF MOSCOW PROGRAM. A UNION OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF HE WORRIED NO AUDIENCE WOULD BE AVAILABLE DUE SUMMER VACATION PERIOD. EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT MEETINGS WITH SOVIET ARTISTS WERE, AFTER ALL, PURPOSE OF EXCHANGE, AT WHICH POINT UNION RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO ACT, FIRST REQUESTING THAT LECTURE BE POSTPONED UNTIL AFTER WYETH'S RETURN FROM LENINGRAD.

2. TYPICAL OF UNION APPROACH TO WYETH PROGRAM WAS LENINGRAD UNION'S OPINION THAT WYETH'S LECTURE/SLIDE SHOW AT MOSCOW UNION WOULD OBIATE NEED FOR SAME AT LENINGRAD UNION. CONSULATE'S VIEW FINALLY PREVAILED AND THE SESSION, ALSO HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL DUE WYETH'S CASUAL, PLEASANT, EASY MANNER, WAS ADDED TO LENINGRAD SCHEDULE. THE MEETING WAS WELL-ATTENDED (AROUND 50-60) AND AUDIENCE STAYED LATE FOR SHOWING OF FILM AND FOR QUESTIONS UNTIL WYETH FINALLY HAD TO LEAVE FOR ANOTHER APPOINTMENT.

3. DURING QUESTION PERIOD AT LENINGRAD UNION ONE OF MAJOR PROBLEMS OF ENTIRE VISIT WAS EMPHASIZED; THE ESCORT-INTERPRETER PROVIDED BY UNION COULD NOT, AND IN SOME CASES WOULD NOT, TRANSLATE CORRECTLY WYETH'S REMARKS DURING EITHER HIS FORMAL PRESENTATION OR QUESTION PERIOD. AT LENINGRAD MEETING IN PARTICULAR, A NUMBER OF SENSITIVE ISSUES WERE RAISED (WYETH'S VISITS TO UNOFFICIALS, HIS OPINION OF RUSSIAN AS OPPOSED TO SOVIET ART), NONE OF WHICH WERE PROPERLY TRANSLATED IN EITHER DIRECTION, IF AT ALL. LAPSES IN ACCURACY AND THOROUGHNESS OF TRANSLATION WERE NOTICED BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE WHO FREQUENTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 11200 081614Z

CORRECTED THE TRANSLATION. NEVERTHELESS, ADMIRATION FOR WYETH AND PLEASURE IN MEETING HIM OBVIOUS AMONG SOVIET ARTISTS. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, FAMILY NAME WAS WELL-KNOWN.

4. IN MOSCOW, WYETH PARTY VISITED TWO STUDIOS OF UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS (NEIZVESTNIY AND RABIN) AND MET WITH FOUR REPRESENTATIVES OF THIS GROUP AT MEETINGS OR-

GANIZED BY EMBASSY, CONSULATE AND UNOFFICIALS.

5. WORTH MENTION IS UNION'S SCHEDULING OF WYETH'S VISIT TO SPACE ART EXHIBIT DURING TIME WHEN EXHIBIT CLOSED TO PUBLIC ALTHOUGH TIMING PROBABLY DUE TO UNION'S CONSIDERATION OF WYETH'S AND HIS WIFE'S COMFORT RATHER THAN TO ANY DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO ISOLATE HIM FROM PUBLIC, IT NOTEWORTHY NO SOVIET ARTISTS REPRESENTED IN EXHIBIT WERE PRESENT DESPITE UNION ASSURANCES A FEW WOULD BE.

6. OTHER THAN VISIT TO STUDIOS MENTIONED SUMMARY, THEN, UNION DID NOT ARRANGE FOR WYETH TO MEET WITH SOVIET ARTISTS AND IN FACT APPEARED SURPRISED WHEN EMBASSY SUGGESTED MORE PERSONAL CONTACTS WOULD BE USEFUL. HAVING ONCE MADE DECISION TO ASSIST IN BRINGING SOVIET ARTISTS TOGETHER WITH WYETH, HOWEVER, UNION ATTITUDE WAS POSITIVE, IF NOT ENERGETIC. IN EMBASSY VIEW UNION NOW UNDERSTANDS IMPORTANCE TO EMBASSY OF EXPOSURE OF AMERICAN ARTISTS, AND EMBASSY WILLING ACCEPT UNION CLAIM THAT SUMMER VACATIONS PRECLUDED, AT LEAST IN PART, MEETINGS WITH MORE ARTISTS.

7. POS REGARDS PROPOSAL, APPARENTLY TAKEN AT HIGH-LEVEL UNION MEETING, FOR EXCHANGE OF WYETH SHOW FOR SOVIET SHOW (REFTEL B) AS POSITIVE INTEREST ON PART OF SOVIETS IN CONTINUING AND EXPANDING EXCHANGES. SIMILARLY, UNION HAS INDICATED SEVERAL TIMES IT ANXIOUS KNOW DETAILS OF PROPOSED RAUSCHENBERG VISIT, ANOTHER SIGN OF ACTIVE UNION INTEREST IN EXCHANGE. DESPITE POOR PROGRAMMING PERFORMANCE BY UNION DURING WYETH VISIT, EMBASSY FEELS FURTHER EXCHANGES OF THIS SORT IMPORTANT AND WORTHWHILE, BOTH IN TERMS OF FOLLOW-UP AND OF KEEPING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 MOSCOW 11200 081614Z

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